

Message Text

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TAGS: MARR, MCAP, UK, NATO

SUBJECT: SECDEF REMARKS ON UK DEFENSE REVIEW

1. FOR POSTS INFORMATION AND RECORDS, FOLLOWING ARE VERBATIM EXTRACTS FROM SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S NEWS CONFERENCE ON DECEMBER 6, TOUCHING ON UK DEFENSE REVIEW:

2. QUESTION: MR. SECRETARY, IN VIEW OF YOUR FORTHCOMING VISIT TO EUROPE WILL YOU COMMENT PLEASE ON THE RECENT BRITISH DEFENSE CUT WORLDWIDE AND ESPECIALLY THE BRITISH DECISION TO PULL OUT ALMOST ENTIRELY FROM ANY COMMITMENTS EAST OF SUEZ? WOULD YOU ALSO COMMENT ON A REPORT IN A LONDON NEWSPAPER THAT HAS YOU SAY, "WE CAN NO LONGER EXPECT THE BRITISH TO PULL ANY WEIGHT" IN DEFENSE MATTERS.

ANSWER: I THINK THAT WE ARE DELIGHTED TO NOTE THAT IN THE COURSE OF THE UK REVIEW, THE BRITISH ARMY OF THE RHINE HAS NOT BEEN TOUCHED, THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO ADHERE TO THE NATO COMMITMENT IN ITS ENTIRETY. THERE IS NO REDUCTION IN THE BRITISH COMMITMENT ON THE CENTRAL

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FRONT. WITH REGARD TO THE UK COMMITMENTS ON A BROADER

BASIS, SOME OF THEM REFLECTED BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES WHICH ARE UNILATERAL OBJECTIVES, SOME OF THEM REFLECTED WHAT I BELIEVE THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UK REGARDS AS VESTIGIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EMPIRE. WE REGRET,

OF COURSE, A SHRINKAGE OF WHAT THE UK REGARDS AS ITS GLOBAL AS OPPOSED TO ITS NATO RESPONSIBILITIES. BUT THAT IS A DECISION THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT MUST TAKE. WITH REGARD TO THE NATO COMMITMENT, OF COURSE, THAT WILL BE DISCUSSED WITHIN THE NAC AND WITHIN THE APPROPRIATE ORGANS OF NATO.

3. QUESTION: WHAT ABOUT THE COMMENT ATTRIBUTED TO YOU IN THE PAPER WHERE YOU SAID YOU COULD NO LONGER EXPECT THE BRITISH TO PULL ANY WEIGHT IN DEFENSE MATTERS? ANSWER: I THINK THAT AS I HAVE INDICATED THE BRITISH REPRESENT A SUBSTANTIAL COMPONENT OF NATO, AND THAT THEY WILL CONTINUE, AS THIS DEFENSE REVIEW SHOWS, TO PERFORM A MAJOR ROLE WITHIN NATO AND THAT WILL BE CONTINUING. I THINK THAT THE GLOBAL ROLE OF GREAT BRITAIN AS INDICATED BY THE NATURE OF THE DEFENSE CUTS WILL SHRINK SO THAT THERE WILL BE LESSER BRITISH WEIGHT FELT EAST OF SUEZ.

4. QUESTION: MR. SECRETARY, DOES NOT THE BRITISH CUTBACK IMPACT ON OUR SITUATION? IN OTHER WORDS, AS I UNDERSTAND IT, THE ROYAL NAVY WILL BE CUT BACK QUITE A BIT. IT SEEMS TO ME THIS WOULD PUT AN ADDED BURDEN ON ASW FOR THE UNITED STATES NAVY. DO YOU SEE IT THAT WAY OR NOT? ANSWER: ANY REDUCTION OF NAVAL FORCES OF COURSE IS SOMETHING WE WOULD PREFER NOT TO HAVE TO LIVE WITH. BUT GIVEN THE POLITICAL COMMITMENTS--THE POLITICAL SITUATION WITHIN BRITAIN--THE ADJUSTMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE IN SUCH A WAY BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT THAT THEY MINIMIZE THEIR IMPACT ON THE VERY IMPORTANT NATO ROLE. KISSINGER

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